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Free Kit for New Parents Now Available to All New Parents in Shasta County

Shasta Children and Families First Commission Kicks Off Distribution to More Than 1,600 Local Parents

Redding – Shasta Children and Families First Commission (SCFFC) is joining with the California Children and Families Commission (CCFC) in distributing free *Kits for New Parents* in Shasta County. The effort is designed to provide practical parenting advice on a wide range of topics, including maternal and child health issues, bonding, attachment and child care available to local parents.

“A child’s brain develops most dramatically during the first three years of life, and what parents and caregivers do during those early years makes a profound difference for the rest of their children’s lives,” said Muffy Berryhill, executive director of the SCFFC.

Initially available in English and Spanish, the *Kit for New Parents* contains six videos narrated by prominent child development experts and celebrities such as Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, Dr. Antonia Novello, Le Var Burton, Jamie Lee Curtis, Gloria Estefan, Andy Garcia, Edward James Olmos, Phylicia Rashad, Rob Reiner, Cristina Saralegui and Maria Shriver. Topics include the importance of the early years, child care, safety, health and nutrition, discipline and early literacy and provide practical ideas to help parents prepare their children to reach their greatest potential in school and life. The *Kit* also includes a series of parenting brochures, a baby book and a resource guide to connect parents with local services.

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The Shasta Children and Families First Commission is partnering with hospitals and parenting education classes to distribute the *Kits*. Mercy Medical Center, Mayers Memorial Hospital and the Shasta County Women, Infants, and Children's Program will be helping in the effort to offer *Kits* to all new parents in Shasta County.

“Our ultimate goal is to get a *Kit for New Parents* into the hands of all new parents in Shasta County. The *Kit for New Parents* is a powerful tool for parents, family members and caregivers committed to giving children the best start in life,” said Jane Andrews, managing coordinator, Mercy Maternity Clinic/Peri-natal Educator. “I’m excited to be able to provide new parents in Shasta County with a tested, proven resource.”

The Center for Community Wellness at the University of California, Berkeley conducted the pilot test of the *Kit for New Parents* that proved so successful that the CCFC and the California Children and Families Association voted to expand distribution statewide. During the pilot, 99 percent of mothers who received the *Kit* suggested that it be given to all parents. Nearly half of the mothers reported changing their behavior or the way they thought about parenting because of the *Kit*.

The Shasta Children and Families First Commission was established after voters passed Proposition 10 (Prop. 10) in November 1998, adding a 50 cent-per-pack tax on cigarettes to fund education, health, child care and other programs to promote early childhood development for expectant parents and children up to age 5. The SCFFC receives nearly 2 million dollars annually for these programs.

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